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[Approved November 8, 2007]

Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate

November 1, 2007

St. Mary's 113 B; 12:00 PM

Present: D. Biers (presiding), T. Eggemeier, P. Johnson, L. Laubach, J. O'Gorman, R. Penno, A. Seielstad, T. Stevens,

J. Farrelly (Faculty Board)
Jack Ling, director of diversity

Roll Call:

Eight members of the Committee were present.

Prayer:

The meeting opened with a prayer from Columbia offered by D. Biers.

Approval of Minutes:

October 25, 2007 approved.

New Business:

Jack Ling, the new Director of Diversity, was welcomed and members introduced themselves to him. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss diversity and how the Academic Senate can help to promote diversity at the University of Dayton. Ling began the conversation by talking about the meaning of diversity. He said that it is best defined as a diversity of perspectives that is informed by race, gender, ethnicity, etc. The challenge for UD is that we do not have many faculty who bring this diversity to the conversations and so those that do can become overextended. He indicated that he supports the development of "diversity champions" who can be called upon to assist the work of various committees and groups, but who do not have to be permanently on these committees.

He explained the history of diversity and noted that in the 1960s diversity was primarily understood as righting past wrongs. Since the 1980s most discussions about diversity at universities are situated in the context of the benefits of diversity for the educational mission of the institution. The term "inclusive excellence" is often used. It was noted that diversity includes international issues. Ling noted the importance of inter-cultural understanding and what he names the "diasporic experience." Understanding diversity in this manner means that student competencies in relation to their ability to understand and address issues about diversity need to be assessed. Institutional decision-making processes need to be evaluated and often changed.

It was asked if the Academic Senate might constitute a committee that would provide a lens for assessing the impact of various policies and processes that come before the Senate. This group might look at issues like recruiting. It might serve at least part of the function of the champions that he advocates. Ling thought that such a faculty group could be helpful to his work and might provide for an on-going strong voice.

The Executive Committee discussed several specific examples of where such a lens would be helpful. The new proposed assessment plan could be evaluated for how the goal of

diversity will be assessed. Protocols for things like exceptions in the hiring process could be determined. Having faculty involvement in setting such protocols and in reviewing the results would establish the institutional authority for such issues and could help create institutional buy-in. Ling indicated that there are recommendations for this approach available from AAC&U as well as from the Great Lakes Consortium and from a group called Minority Presence in Liberal Arts Colleges.

The conversation ended with a brief discussion of the importance of hiring faculty and developing the curriculum for attracting students. Often hiring faculty in cohorts has been successful. Faculty need to be connected in the area of research and scholarship and need to see that their professional work is considered valuable both by their peers and for the curriculum.

The Executive Committee thanked Jack Ling for his time and insight.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 1:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia A. Johnson, Secretary